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ABSTRACT

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education conducted a two-year study to identify and categorize the problems of the United States Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education which interfered with the administration and operation of programmatic services for vocational education. After the first year of the study, an interim report (CE 022 380) was prepared and distributed highlighting several problems in such areas as the Bureau's structure, staffing, Operational Planning System, and external factors. During the second phase, nine substudies were conducted to verify whether the problems identified in the Interim Report could be generalized to the Bureau as a whole. They were also designed to determine the effects of these and other problems on programmatic services to state personnel. After the problems had been examined, recommendations to bring about effective management and delivery of vocational education programs and services were made to the Office of Education. (BM)

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NACVE

A STUDY OF THE ADMINISTRATION, OPERATION, AND PROGRAM SERVICES OF VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education
U.S. Office of Education

From The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education
425 13th Street, N.W., Suite 412, Washington, D.C. 20004

Donald N. McDowell, *Task Force Chairperson*
Caroline Hughes
Virla R. Krotz
Gwendolyn Newkirk

Staff: Ralph Bregman
Sarah A. Bennett

A Report by the
National Advisory Council
On Vocational Education

December, 1978

CE 022 379

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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In addition, the National Advisory Council is mandated to provide technical assistance and leadership to State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education, in order to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

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NACVE

December 28, 1978

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer
Commissioner of Education
Department of Health, Education & Welfare
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Room 4181D
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Commissioner Boyer:

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, in accordance with the mandates in Public Law 94-482, is pleased to submit this report on the administration and operation of and the programmatic services provided by the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education.

One of the important findings of this study, conducted over a two-year period, is the failure of major policy makers to establish a national commitment to vocational education that would favorably influence the development of programs under Public Law 94-482. Of equal concern is the Bureau's need for more qualified professionals. Although we realize that the size of the Bureau's staff was increased in September, 1978, the Council does not believe that these employees have adequate experience and expertise in vocational education.

Furthermore, while this report provides an understanding of some of the fundamental problems affecting the Bureau's operations, the other changes that occurred in the Bureau during and subsequent to the study period will modify some of the observations. The report should be read in this context.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study suggest the importance of further analysis of the Bureau. Accordingly, the Council has chosen to focus its efforts over the next two years on a "Reassessment of the Federal Role in Vocational Education." Such a focus will enable us to further examine the issues and concerns surfaced in the report. Along with other agencies, organizations, and individuals, we shall attempt to develop a framework for a human resource development policy, encompassing, but not limited to, traditional vocational education programs and concerns.

The Council will continue to conscientiously fulfill its mandates. We shall provide you, the President, the Secretary, and Congress with the results and recommendations of further studies conducted in fiscal years 1979 and 1980.

Respectfully yours,

John W. Thiele
Chairperson

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education
425 Thirteenth Street, N.W., Suite 412, Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 376 8873

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INTRODUCTION

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, in accordance with the mandates of the Education Amendments of 1968 and 1976 (P.L. 94-482, Title II, Section 162(b)(1) and (2)), conducted a study of the Office of Education's Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (the Bureau).

The overall focus of the Council's study was to identify and categorize the problems in the Bureau which interfered with the administration and operation of programmatic services for vocational education. After the problems had been examined, recommendations to bring about the effective management and delivery of vocational education programs and services were to be made to the Office of Education.

Implied in the study design was the belief that the effectiveness of a mutually beneficial and supportive federal-state-local relationship depended, in large measure, on the level and quality of federal guidance and technical assistance to the states. In its absence, the expansion and improvement of federally-supported programs and services was diminished and innovation minimized. More appropriately, federal activities should be designed to encourage coordinated state efforts to provide ready access to quality vocational education for people of all ages in all communities.

Interest in conducting the study was prompted by several circumstances suggesting the problems that adversely affected the Bureau's activities. First, the General Accounting Office reported in "What is the Role of Federal Assistance for Vocational Education?," 1974, that the Office of Education did not provide adequate guidance to states to help ensure that the purposes of the law as envisioned by Congress would be accomplished. Second, vocational educators criticized the Bureau for not providing sustained direction and leadership for vocational education. Third, Congressional staff expressed concern about the extent of the Bureau's plans to implement provisions of the 1976 Amendments. And, fourth, in the last ten years, the administrations' fiscal policies have given low priority to vocational education.

After the first year of the study, begun in September, 1976, an interim report, highlighting several problems in such areas as the Bureau's structure, staffing, Operational Planning System, and external factors, was prepared and distributed. Specific observations of each of these problems were presented and the Bureau was informally invited to reply to them. Since there was no response from the Bureau, the study proceeded to a second phase with the assumption that those observations were accurate.

During the second phase, nine substudies were conducted to verify whether the problems identified in the Interim Report could be generalized to the Bureau as a whole. They were also designed to determine the effects of these and other problems on programmatic services to state personnel.

Two major changes occurred during the latter phase of the study which will have an impact on the identified problems. First, the Civil Service Reform Act, passed in October, 1978, will affect those employment procedures which were not responsive to the personnel needs of the Bureau. Second, a new Deputy Commissioner (designee), appointed in September, 1978, initiated changes which will reorient the management procedures of the Bureau through the development of a master plan and the revision of the Mission Statement.

Although the study focused on problems, the Council wishes to emphasize that there were many meaningful activities carried out by the Bureau staff. In spite of the problems, the staff continued their efforts to improve vocational education programs. The information found in this study should be used, not to evaluate the performance of any individual staff member but, to view the organization as an entity in transition, adjusting to the demands and requirements of Public Law 94-482. The Council acknowledges the helpfulness of those who so willingly participated in the study. Without their cooperation, the preparation of this report would have been very difficult.

METHODOLOGY

In pursuit of its responsibility, the Council approved the study of the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education, to be conducted during a two-year period. The study concentrated on a broad range of problems that were adversely affecting the administration and operation of vocational education program activities conducted by the Bureau.

General Accounting Office reports suggested that there were problems lessening the Bureau's effectiveness and leadership. A 1972 General Accounting Office report called upon the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to have the Department's regional offices monitor more closely the use of funds for the educationally disadvantaged and to coordinate the efforts of the Department and the states in obtaining the kinds of information that could be used to properly evaluate programs. A more prescriptive General Accounting Office report published in 1974, recommended that the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare take specific actions to improve practices in planning programs, distributing funds, using resources, and relating employment to training. Prior to the passage of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, Congressional hearings exposed the irregular pursuit of these recommendations. The Amendments sought, in part, to remedy the situation by emphasizing processes and procedures in order to implement vocational education at the national, state, and local levels.

The Council established a Task Force to conduct a study of the Bureau's operational response to the Amendments. The Task Force drafted the methodology and procedures for Phase I--Fiscal Year 1976-77 and Phase II--Fiscal Year 1977-78. The study used descriptive research to identify and characterize the problems impinging on the administration and operation of the Bureau and the consequent effects on programmatic services to the states. The case study survey was determined to be the most practical and efficient method for gathering a broad array of data on those problems. The study design regarded the Bureau as an entity within which interactions and interrelationships influenced the behavior of the organization and its subparts.

In order to understand the Bureau's internal and external relationships and any attendant problems, two research questions were developed. One asked whether there were problems with the administration and/or operation of the Bureau which hindered it from carrying out its activities. The second question asked whether the Bureau was fulfilling the function of assisting states in implementing vocational education by providing them with the necessary programmatic and functional services.

Data were obtained primarily through structured personal interview schedules with free options to explore responses and structured

questionnaires with open-ended items. Instruments were pilot-tested, revised, and used by Task Force members and staff to conduct the interviews. Four of five participant substudies assured anonymity to the respondents. The one exception advised the respondents that although the information they provided would be paraphrased, it was probable that their answers could be identified. All Bureau program specialists and supervisors were invited to participate. In states chosen by stratified random sample, two surveys were conducted with state directors and supervisors of vocational education.

A feasibility study and a total of nine substudies designed to provide insight into or replication of facts related to the problems confronting the Bureau were completed. Supplementary documentation from a variety of sources was analyzed and incorporated into the study.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this study, the Council found substantial problems affecting the administration and operation of the Bureau. The Council concluded from the problems, grouped into nine categories, that the administration of programs and services to the states would be improved by (a) obtaining a national commitment to vocational education; (b) developing, through a master plan, the structure, staffing pattern, and staff development needed to support that plan; and, (c) establishing and maintaining a strong federal-state-local working relationship based on technical assistance and a responsive two-way communications network. This relationship would encourage all levels of government to assist in executing the goals and priorities of a master plan.

The nine categories for which findings and conclusions are presented are: National Commitment, Mission Statement, Structure, Staffing, Operational Planning System, Internal and External Communication and Cooperation, Technical Assistance, Personnel Development, and Functional Activities.

NATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Council found a pattern in the activities performed by administrative officials, indicating a general lack of support for vocational education. When, in 1963 and 1968, Congress made substantial changes in the federal operation of vocational education, the Office of Education made no corresponding alterations in its organizational structure. By an act of Congress in 1972, the position of Deputy Commissioner for Vocational Education, reporting directly to the Commissioner of Education, was finally created. However, during the critical period for initial implementation of the 1976 Education Amendments, this position was filled by an acting deputy. Even though Congress detailed the specific responsibilities and expanded services through these Amendments, the Administration requested budget cuts for vocational education in fiscal years 1979 and 1980. Further, materials without adequate support data from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Office of Education, suggested that vocational programs did not contribute to the quality of students' economic progress.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that federal administrators had not made a substantive commitment to vocational education. It appeared that the lack of commitment had caused an erosion in the confidence and morale of the Bureau staff. A positive intervention by the Commissioner of Education is needed to emphasize a commitment to improved programming.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Council found that the Bureau's Mission Statement was inadequate as a primary management document for the following reasons: (a) although the missions of each organizational unit were well presented, the Statement could not lend itself to the development of a plan addressing long-range priorities; (b) the goals and priority issues for which the Bureau would be held accountable were not clearly identified; (c) existing inter- and intra-agency agreements, and the linking of the resources needed to achieve objectives, were not specified; (d) within the Bureau, the coordination of resources to effect change in particular areas was not made evident; (e) the Mission Statement did not accurately depict the extent of the activities performed by the units because some missions were not incorporated into the Operational Planning System; and, (f) the Mission Statement did not provide operational definitions of technical assistance and leadership.

Conclusions. The Council concluded that the Bureau's Mission Statement needed a comprehensive revision which would be the basis for the development of a master plan addressing priorities and supporting a national policy. A formal endorsement by the Commissioner of Education of the Master Plan and the Mission Statement will be needed.

STRUCTURE

The Council found that the existing structure of the Bureau required improvement for the following reasons: (a) the units of Consumer, Metric, and Community Education were not incorporated into the activities of the Bureau; (b) the planning roles of the Office of Occupational Planning, the Planning Office, and the Division of State Vocational Program Operations were not well-delineated, causing duplication and confusion of responsibilities (especially in policy planning for programs, evaluation, information analysis, and allocation of funds for programs); (c) a comprehensive information system within the structure was needed to satisfy Bureau program planning and budgeting needs and to answer constituent inquiries; (d) the development of a master plan will probably necessitate a restructuring of the Bureau to carry out the priority of increased assistance to state and local education agencies; and, (e) the possible benefits of reorganization needed to be documented and evaluated.

Conclusions. The Council concluded that there was a need for a reorganization in order to: (a) incorporate into the Bureau all assigned units and their resources; (b) delegate the functions of policy planning in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and confusion among the Office of Occupational Planning, the Planning

Office, and the Division of State Vocational Program Operations; and, (c) maintain the flexibility needed to adapt to a new form of governance and new legislative initiatives. An internal system to evaluate the effects of reorganization was also needed (see Operational Planning System).

STAFFING

The Council found that there were several factors adversely affecting proper and adequate staffing of the Bureau. Although a Congressional mandate increased the staff ceiling by 68 positions in fiscal year 1978, the Bureau filled only 20 percent of those positions. Further, as of the summer of 1978, the Bureau was staffed at 60 percent of its total personnel authorization. While ceiling levels for the Division of Vocational-Technical Education and the Division of Research and Demonstration were increased, the actual number of staff decreased, putting them significantly below their allotments. A shortage of clerical staff existed in such units as the Planning Office and the Division of Research and Demonstration. Furthermore, the number of vacant clerical positions in all units required continuous monitoring to maintain an adequate staff load. The Work Measurement System did not adequately identify the actual personnel needs of the Bureau.

Conclusions. Insufficient staffing throughout the Bureau and especially in the Division of Vocational-Technical Education and the Division of Research and Demonstration adversely affected the quality and quantity of assistance to the states. An improvement in the Work Measurement System is needed.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM

The Council found that there was confusion among the Bureau staff about the purpose of the Operational Planning System. While some managers used it as a management tool for evaluation, most staff members regarded it primarily as a planning mechanism. Further problems arose because systems for performance evaluation and internal planning had not been perfected. (The need for such systems would become more apparent if a new management orientation were adopted as recommended in the Mission Statement section.)

Conclusion. The Council concluded that misconceptions about the Operational Planning System tended to nullify its effectiveness. The Bureau needed an improved system to evaluate individual and unit performance and to outline year-to-year operations according to goals and priorities specified in a master plan.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

The Council found that the Bureau did not have a satisfactory system for providing internal and external communication and cooperation. Information was not well-channeled within the Bureau, and the supply to state and local educators was inadequate. Intra- and inter-agency agreements were not made part of the Bureau's planning system and there was no evidence that the Bureau staff or vocational educators knew of such working relationships and the kinds of assistance that might result from them. (Fourteen agreements were reviewed by the Council but other areas existed where such agreements might be established.) Information about staff responsibilities and Bureau activities was not systematically distributed to the field. In addition, there was no formal mechanism from which to obtain input on problems or research priorities from the field.

Conclusions. The Council concluded that the message content, the frequency, the various media, and the feedback from the Bureau's internal and external communications were inadequate. Without a continuous flow of meaningful information, units tended to become isolated. Efforts to promote inter-agency cooperation through agreements had been made, but follow-up on such arrangements was uneven.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Council found that programmatic and functional assistance and leadership to the states from the Bureau was inadequate. The Bureau's prohibition on staff attendance at state or regional meetings inhibited the creation of a feedback system to help in the determination of priorities and legislation. The absence of leadership within the Bureau prevented coordination and cooperation with the states and thwarted the development of a strong federal-state-local relationship.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that although technical assistance and leadership were critical factors in establishing and maintaining a strong federal-state-local relationship, they had been neglected.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Council found that personnel development within the Bureau was insufficient. More in-service activities were needed to improve job competencies, human relations, and attitudes. In addition,

staff development will be needed to help implement the recommendations presented in this study. A competent staff will be needed to conduct technical assistance, use a revised Operational Planning System, and help evaluate the impact of the assistance to state and local agencies.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that there was a need for a more effective staff development program.

FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Council found that the functional activities of evaluation, CETA coordination, and research were inadequate for the following reasons:

(a) The number of quality review packages used in the Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality activities was insufficient. The quality reviews were limited to functional areas and did not include program disciplines.

(b) Although the Bureau was responsible for the manpower training and development functions of the Office of Education (P.L. 94-482, Title II, Section 160(a)(2)), the responsibilities of the CETA Unit in relation to the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project were not clearly defined. The Unit's activities were limited primarily to gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information, and did not provide on-site, technical assistance to educational agencies or to prime sponsors.

(c) The Division of Research and Demonstration did not keep State Research Coordinating Units adequately informed about its activities or the development of priorities. Enough time was not allowed for states to respond to Requests for Proposals. Dissemination for effective utilization of information and products was inadequate. In addition, the Coordinating Committee on Research had not fulfilled its mandated responsibilities. There was no formal mechanism within the Division with which to track, interpret, and disseminate vocational education research activities conducted by other agencies. There was no continuing, long-term effort to concentrate discretionary funds (from research through dissemination) on national priorities. The Joint Agreement between the Commissioners of Education and Indian Affairs required by Public Law 95-40 could not be implemented without their authorizations. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs had not authorized the agreement.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that the functions of evaluation, CETA coordination with vocational education, and research, and their influence on state and local operations, had not been developed to their potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANTICIPATED RESULTS

Based on the Findings and Conclusions outlined in the preceding section, the Council recommends the following to improve the administration and operation of the Bureau. The Council believes that favorable action on the recommendations will facilitate the delivery of vocational education. The anticipated results from the implementation of the recommendations are also described.

NATIONAL COMMITMENT

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Commissioner of Education:

- Endorse the Bureau's Master Plan including a revised mission statement and distribute it as widely as possible.

Anticipated Results. The outcome of such a recommendation could have far-reaching consequences. An endorsement by the Commissioner would result in: (a) A long-term commitment of funds and personnel to the goals and activities made explicit in the Master Plan and the Mission Statement; (b) The participation of vocational education in any national dialogue on the goals and priorities of American education (the Council of Chief State School Officers in November, 1978, called upon the Commissioner to create a National Commission on Educational Goals and Priorities); (c) An increase in the attention commanded by inter- and intra-agency agreements; (d) The establishment of productive working linkages with units such as International Education and Teacher Corps; (e) A restructuring of the Commissioner's Annual Report, making more explicit the contribution of vocational education to the overall educational effort; and, (f) The development and distribution of a national policy statement related to the endorsement of the Master Plan.

MISSION STATEMENT

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Commissioner of Education, acting through the Bureau:

- Revise the Mission Statement and make it part of a master plan specifying the goals, priorities, and activities related to the mandates of Public Law 94-482 and other relevant legislation.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from the revision of the Mission Statement: (a) An identification of and emphasis on priority issues rather than activities of organizational units; (b) The preparation of a master plan that commits future resources to long-range priority issues; (c) A delineation of the operational authority and accountability of Bureau units; (d) A designation of the responsibility for managing inter- and intra-agency agreements; (e) A clarification of the role of technical assistance and the operational meaning of leadership; and, (f) An improvement in the frequency, format, and availability of information to the field concerning each unit's activities and products.

STRUCTURE

Recommendations

The Council recommends that:

- The Commissioner of Education, acting through the Bureau, develop an organizational structure to support the Master Plan and Mission Statement. (A structure with functional designations should be considered in order to carry out the Master Plan and to adapt to legislative initiatives. For example, a unit could be designed to comprehensively manage information and documentation or a special populations unit could be created to help states provide better services to the disadvantaged, handicapped, bilingual, and displaced homemakers.)

- The Bureau acquire the services of a group of impartial experts to conduct, in order to clarify responsibilities, an analysis of the program evaluation and planning functions of the Office of Occupational Planning and the Planning Office and the efforts of the Division of State Vocational Program Operations.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from the implementation of the recommendations: (a) The resources of all Bureau units would be used to fulfill the goals, priorities, and activities specified in the Master Plan; (b) A reorganizaed Bureau would be able to adapt to future changes without requiring large-scale restructuring; (c) The evaluations of Bureau programs would be coordinated in an appropriate unit; and (d) The planning requirements of the Bureau and the specific responsibilities of its units for planning assistance to the states would be clarified.

STAFFING

Recommendations

The Council recommends that:

- The Commissioner, acting through the Bureau, fill the 57 positions remaining from the 68 mandated through the law, and further, lend his support in filling these positions without delay. (The Council acknowedges the freezes placed on employment and other personnel restrictions.)

- The Bureau negotiate procedures, exemptions, or alternatives within the freeze on personnel in order to employ qualified secretarial and clerical staff and professionals with expertise in vocational education.

- The Bureau give priority attention to staffing the Divisions of Vocational-Technical Education and Research and Demonstration and, in particular, make more professionals available to staff programmatic areas (Trade and Industry, Business and Office Education, and other recognized disciplines) and specific functional areas (evaluation, CETA, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped).

- The Bureau develop, in concert with personnel from the Office of Management and Budget, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Office of Education, and separately implement, an improved Work Measurement System.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from changes in the staffing pattern: (a) The problems of excessive workloads and special assignments would be minimized; (b) Personnel qualified by experience and training would be able to provide regular programmatic and functional services to the states to assist them in improving and expanding vocational education; (c) As services to the field are increased, at least two qualified professionals would be needed to staff each of the programmatic areas; and, (d) Expense funds would be allocated to such personnel as part of the internal planning of activities.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Establish a system that separately provides for:

(1) managerial planning and the evaluation of that planning; and, (2) evaluation of the effectiveness of services to the states in bringing about an improvement in the delivery of vocational education.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from the creation of this system: (a) The Bureau's critical need for performance criteria for managers, supervisors, and operational staff would become evident; (b) Bureau services would be appraised by the manner and extent to which they achieved stated objectives, met expectations of state and local vocational educators, produced unexpected consequences, and assisted in future policy and decision-making; and, (c) The managerial planning system would be able to incorporate and provide for the implementation of the recommendations of this and other studies.

Furthermore, a revised managerial planning system could be integrated into an improved work measurement system that would accurately describe personnel needs. Information about plans could be distributed to state and local vocational education personnel to outline for them the extent and concentration of Bureau activities.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Establish and maintain a formal internal and external communications network to supply timely and continuous information to the Bureau staff and to state and local vocational educators and to obtain feedback from the field.

Anticipated Results. Implementation of this recommendation would result in a widespread change in the kinds, frequency, and content of information disseminated internally and externally, so that, for example, a state advisory council would automatically receive notice of research awards made in the state. An overview of the goals, priorities, organization, staff assignments, and available resources, including technical assistance, could be published periodically and sent to the field. (This publication would contain information more extensive than that found in the Commissioner's Annual Report.) A yearly comprehensive report on the status of vocational education could present and discuss the changes brought about through a federal-state-local collaboration and any anticipated or encountered problems. Inter- and intra-agency agreements represent a unique form of networking and cooperation. Resources

needed to put such agreements into effect would become part of the internal managerial planning and accountability process.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Commissioner, acting through the Bureau:

- Establish and adequately fund an operational procedure for technical assistance which would allow specialists to participate in state and regional meetings and make on-site visits, emphasizing services to community and junior colleges and adult vocational education programs.

Anticipated Results. The implementation of the Council's recommendation would bring about: (a) An adjustment in the allocation of expense funds; (b) A delegation of the responsibility for conducting technical assistance as part of the Master Plan; (c) The development of instruments to give specialists an opportunity to demonstrate the impact of their technical assistance and leadership efforts; (d) The provision of continuous assistance by program specialists to state and local agencies in the areas of their programmatic or functional expertise (specifically, in the recognized program disciplines and in such functional areas as state and local planning; programming for the disadvantaged, the handicapped, and displaced homemakers; program evaluation; research development, demonstration and distribution; and state formulation for the distribution of funds); (e) The development of well-defined technical assistance plans; and, (f) The evaluation of the effectiveness of technical assistance plans and procedures.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Initiate a staff development program to improve supervisory practices, human relations, communication, intra-agency coordination of activities, technical assistance and leadership skills, and the administration of a revised Operational Planning System.

Anticipated Results. Implementation of the recommendation would improve productivity and intra-agency coordination and provide

additional feedback on the needs of the staff. Also, the staff of the Office of the Commissioner could be consulted for expert advice on organizational development and training.

FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recommendations

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Expand the scope of the Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality by increasing the number of quality reviews to such areas as CETA coordination with vocational education, youth organizations, teacher and ancillary-staff preparation, state and local advisory councils, and guidance and counseling.

- Expand the activities of the CETA Unit in order to complement the new initiatives and linkages resulting from the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretaries of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare (March, 1978) and new CETA legislation (P.L. 95-524).

- In conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, develop and implement the mandated requirements to establish a joint agreement and plan for programs for Indian vocational education.

- Through the Division of Research and Demonstration:

  (a) establish a more effective communications network with state personnel for planning and coordinating both priorities and activities for improvement in programs and dissemination practices, and for allowing more time for states to respond to Requests for Proposals;

  (b) provide technical assistance for all Research Coordinating Unit activities, in particular, the development of studies analyzing impact of efforts;

  (c) implement the mandated requirements to develop a plan for national research priorities and a system for management research information;

  (d) provide leadership in guiding, organizing, tracking, interpreting, and disseminating the results of federal and state research projects; and,

(e) concentrate and coordinate sufficient long-term resources for research, demonstration, guidance, and curriculum and personnel development to address specific national priorities until substantial results are achieved.

Anticipated Results. The follow would result from the implementation of the recommendations: (a) The roles and responsibilities of the three units would be expanded; (b) A large, qualified staff would be needed to adapt to the expanded responsibilities, including outreach and networking; and, (c) The Division of Research and Demonstration would be responsible for the coordination of all the Bureau's research efforts.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Finally, the Council requests that:

- The Commissioner of Education prepare an annual progress report on action taken to carry out the recommendations herein set forth.

Although the Council's study considered many problems within the Bureau, it must be remembered that there were other issues that could not be examined due to the limits of time and funding. For example, the allocation and distribution of salary and expense funds, the establishment of the budget, the process and follow-up of state plan analysis, and the recruitment and employment of qualified personnel were four important activities which should be studied. Nevertheless, the Council believes that decisive action on the nine examined problems will improve the workings of the Bureau.

It must be emphasized that the problems impairing the effective functioning of the Bureau are interrelated. In order to bring about an improvement in the administration and delivery of vocational education, the recommendations must be acted upon together. No one recommendation will be able to effect all the necessary changes. Only through comprehensive action will the recommendations increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bureau and lead to the improvement and expansion of vocational education. It is vital to the American system of education that an organization be developed which will move forward, not only to improve existing activities, but to fulfill the goals of vocational education through a clear vision, a new framework, and a firm national commitment from the Administration to match Congressional support.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Council firmly believes that vocational education is effective and that, through its federal funds and directives, it achieves impact throughout the states. The degree of impact is a measure of the extent to which national leadership melds the diversity of federal, state, and local interests into a coherent policy for the delivery of quality programs. Leadership must be meaningful, concise, consistent, and timely in order to bring about effective administrative and operational practices.

Although the Education Amendments of 1976 encouraged the Bureau to develop an innovative style to manage limited resources and conduct business, barriers sometimes arose which inhibited creative efforts. The following narration describes the barriers which confronted the Bureau. These were the internal and external problems from which the conclusions and recommendations of the previous section were drawn.

National Commitment. From 1906 to 1917, the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education attempted to bring to the attention of the nation the urgent need for strong, federal leadership in vocational education. With the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, a national framework was finally created. The realization of a national leadership and commitment facilitated the development of vocational education in all states.

Although several laws, passed from 1917 to 1976, encouraged the improvement and expansion of vocational education, federal officials did not always match the intent of Congress. When in 1963, and again in 1968, Congress made substantial changes in the federal operation of vocational education, no corresponding change was made in the Office of Education's organizational structure to place vocational education in direct administrative contact with the Commissioner of Education. The unit was thus separated from the center of the strategic policy-making process. The remoteness of the vocational education unit was further reflected by the 1967-1970 administrative structure of the Office of Education which inappropriately included Library Programs in the unit. To reconcile the problem, Congress passed legislation in 1972 that required the Bureau to be headed by a deputy commissioner who would have direct access to the policy and decision-making processes.

The absence of a national commitment to vocational education was also manifested in another pattern of events beginning in 1976. In that year, Congress passed the Education Amendments and included provisions for vocational education. Some of these provisions emphasized such processes as state and local planning and program evaluation. Implementation of the legislation was the responsibility

of the Bureau, headed at that time by an "acting deputy." The Bureau remained without a permanent deputy until September, 1978. According to the Bureau's staff, the appointment of a permanent deputy was critical in order to resolve such internal management issues as increasing the size of the staff and the amount of expense funds. A permanent deputy was also needed to establish an agenda of national priorities supported by the Office of Education.

In March, 1978, the Commissioner of Education identified three crucial goals in American education, ensuring access, promoting excellence and quality, and moving ahead in new directions, that were subsequently translated into specific budget requests for fiscal year 1979. The Commissioner made no mention of vocational education and, compared to fiscal year 1978, requested a seven million dollar reduction in vocational education funds.

When asked about the priority of vocational education, the Commissioner stated that "holding the line" on vocational education funding "represents frankly not a low priority but a pause until we determine the best way for us to infuse still more money that might get to urgent needs." A year later, however, this "pause" was translated into an even larger budget reduction. A letter from the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, to the House Labor/HEW Subcommittee Chairperson stated that:

> The House bill increased State grants for Vocational Education by nearly $37 million and the Senate has added another $51 million. The Senate partially offset the increase in State grants by providing no funds for the so-called Programs of National Significance, a cut of $30 million. Vocational Education is one of the Department's least effective programs and Federal funding should be held level or reduced. We urge that the conferees support the House bill on grants to States and also accept the Senate reduction in Programs of National Significance.

The Administration's support of the $44 million reduction in vocational education funds and its statement that vocational education was "one of the Department's least effective programs" confirmed the absence of a national commitment. In the final analysis, the Administration's request for 1979 was $54 million less than the Congressional appropriation. As a matter of fact, since 1968, the Administration's budget requests have been 19 percent lower than the Congressional appropriations. In all but one year, the Administration's requests did not even match the previous years' Congressional appropriation. In the year 1973, for example, the

the Administration requested $498 million while Congress granted $576 million. In the next year, the Administration's request was only $526 million, $50 million less.

The Department's lack of monetary commitment to vocational education was again demonstrated in the preparation of the fiscal year 1980 budget (forward-funded by one year) which called for $182 million less than appropriated for fiscal year 1979. Most of the proposed reduction in funds was to the Basic Grants to States Program. Support for this position was presented in an evaluation summary of the effects of the Grants to States Program, prepared in the Assistant Secretary of Education's office. Without presenting evidence, the summary stated that vocational education created no labor market advantages for its graduates. Educators and others vigorously protested the Administration's disavowal of the contribution vocational education made to students' economic progress. Subsequently, the proposed 1980 fiscal request was increased and made identical to the 1979 level.

Position papers and reports prepared for the administration provide further insight into prevailing attitudes about vocational education. In March, 1977, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Education published a document (containing a disclaimer), entitled Toward a Federal Policy on Education and Work, which argued that there was no national interest which would be adversely affected by a reduction in vocational education enrollment at the state or local level. In response to an idea that Congressional legislation emphasized the expansion of programs at the expense of the quality of programs, the document further proposed a new federal strategy that would be more concerned with quality. By so doing, the Administration lessened the pressure to expand programs through grants to the states, suggesting that quantity and quality were mutually exclusive. Another example of the attitudes about vocational education was found in the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Education. The basic format of these reports in the years 1974-1976, discussed vocational education separately from the sections dealing with the primary educational goals of equal access and quality. The placement of the discussion of vocational education outside these sections reinforces the concept of vocational education being outside the educational process, furthering the idea that it does not contribute to the attainment of those basic skills which are necessary to function fully in our society.

A declaration of commitment from the Commissioner would provide vocational education with the leverage needed to participate in other federal programs. For example, vocational education could become involved in the Teacher Corps program in order to improve services to the disadvantaged. Vocational education could also become involved in international education projects and the Fund

for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education as well as youth employment and correction education programs that were established in the Education Amendment of 1978 (P.L. 95-561, Sec. 341 and 371). Although the section in the Act on correction education authorized grants related to academic and vocational education of juvenile and adult offenders, the mandated advisory committee membership did not include the Bureau. A commitment from the Commissioner would ensure the Bureau's participation.

A coordination of efforts and resources at the national level is needed to effectively address the problems in delivering quality vocational education to those who want to prepare for employment. A national commitment from the Office of Education would place and maintain vocational education in the mainstream of educational policy, decision-making, and access to the activities of other units. In order to accomplish such a reorientation, the Commissioner of Education should emphasize a commitment to improved programming by supporting a revised master plan.

Mission Statement. The Bureau's primary management document included an overall mission statement for the Bureau and explanations of each operating unit's responsibilities. Timelines for projects from these units were subsequently described in the Operational Planning System.

As developed by the Bureau, the Mission Statement did not adequately identify long-range program policies, priorities with goal levels, or specific short-range activities designed to implement the policies. Ideally, the policy-making process follows a pattern of problem identification, policy formulation, and legislative action. After the identification of a problem, policy formulation takes place in order to delineate the direction to be taken. Legislation then provides the authority to implement the policy. One problem identified in vocational education was to provide equal access to women, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped. The Bureau's policy, described in its mission statement, declared that the efforts of the national administration would assure equal access to educational opportunities for all residents and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programs. The 1976 legislation continued to provide the framework in which to bring about equal access, equality, effectiveness, and efficiency. It was found, in this study, however, that the Mission Statement did not give an adequate description of policy nor did it provide information about these and other priorities, goals, and specific programs to be developed in order to bring about change.

A more comprehensive document, a master plan, that incorporates

the mission statements, policies, goals, and activities of the Bureau would better serve its administrative and operational requirements. A master plan should include the priority issues identified by the Bureau's recently appointed Deputy Commissioner. As of September, 1978, those priority issues were to (a) develop an articulated national philosophy and policy for vocational education; (b) establish a positive connection with CETA programs; (c) expand and improve programs for inner city youth; (d) enhance accessibility for youth and adults to quality programs; (e) improve the planning, accountability, and data systems; (f) enlarge the capacity to provide effective guidance; (g) address vocational equity; (h) respond to the needs of the handicapped and the educationally and economically disadvantaged; and (i) continue to maintain relationships with general education by focusing on basic skills. With a revised management plan, these priorities could be adequately described and implemented. Any other policy areas such as coordination of resources and activities, which have been neglected in the past could also be detailed in the master plan.

Other situations emphasized the need for a more specific management document. For example, the implementation of 14 inter- and intra-agency agreements was not specified in the Mission Statement or in the Operational Planning System. State vocational personnel and the Bureau staff had no knowledge of the existence, purpose, and opportunities created by agreements such as that between the Bureau and the Administration on Aging and the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped. Agreements provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate national commitment and to unify resources. An intra-agency agreement made between Teacher Corps and the Bureau's Community Education Program was a logical connection because of the continuing emphasis on serving the disadvantaged. No such arrangement existed however. Cooperation between the Bureau and Job Corps also could be beneficial. Job Corps' instructional materials could be made available to the vocational field as are the military services' prepared curricula. The Small Business Administration and Action represent other areas where agreements could have been established.

The Mission Statement also did not include the coordination of resources in order to effect change. For example, while the Division of Research and Demonstration was responsible for carrying out the efforts of the Coordinating Committee on Research, the critical assignment was not formalized in the management document. Incorporating such responsibilities into the Mission Statement could make possible the identification and initiation of agreements with other agencies such as the Department of Labor's Office of Policy, Evaluation and Research. The Division's mission

statement also did not specify a responsibility for the systematic and cumulative development of a knowledge bank by which critical questions related to program innovation and improvement could be answered. As observed in the 1976 Vocational Education Research and Development Study, priorities for research and development were not based on the results of previous research and support for research, demonstration, and curriculum development had not been arranged on a long-ranged, scientifically-based schedule for national priorities.

There was no correlation between some items in the Mission Statement and the appropriate program objectives detailed in the Operational Planning System's document. For example, it was the CETA Coordination Unit's mission to provide leadership and coordination in the planning and development of policies for using the resources of the Office of Education to support the efforts of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. However, there was no parallel objective in the unit's Operational Planning System.

The absence of an operational definition of national leadership in the Mission Statement inhibited the development of strong leadership. While, for example, the CETA Unit's mission was to "provide leadership and coordination in the planning and development of policies," it did not explain how to bring about such leadership. The Bureau declared in the introduction to its mission statement that it would continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programs. Although reference was made to evaluation in a few places in the document, there was no common theme in the narration to ensure the acceptance of the priority of improved effectiveness and efficiency.

It is imperative that a revised mission statement be developed which expands upon and brings into focus the planned changes proposed by the Bureau. A master plan more accurately describes the type of management document that will guide the administrative and operational efforts. This plan would specify how the legislated responsibilities of the Commissioner relate to the Office of Education's policies and the activities designed to achieve them.

Structure. The development of a comprehensive management document specifying policies, priorities, goal levels, and responsibilities would be facilitated by an organizational structure designed to assist in its implementation. A master plan would bring about a coherent use of resources and an integration of all the units of the Bureau to work toward the improvement and expansion of vocational education.

Structural problems within the Bureau existed in several areas. For one, the resources of the Offices of Consumer's Education, Metric Education, and Community Education had not been mainstreamed into the operations of the Bureau as a whole (see Organization Display, Appendix A). Thus, interaction among the units was infrequent. To reconcile the problem, a suggestion by Bureau staff was made that would combine Community, Consumer, Metric, and Adult Education, and CETA under a new associate commissioner.

It was hoped that a reorganization of some kind would resolve the issue of conflicting responsibilities among units. Specifically, there was a duplication of planning responsibilities in the Office of Occupational Planning and in the Planning Office. Planning responsibilities were also delegated to the Division of State Vocational Program Operations. The ambiguity caused confusion among the Bureau staff, making it difficult for them to know which office was responsible for the policy planning and which for the management planning of programs, evaluations, information systems, and resource allocations.

The duplication seemed to arise from another structural problem. The Bureau's organizational chart displayed the Planning Office as an advisory staff unit reporting directly to the Deputy while the Office of Occupational Planning was shown as a line unit. Occupational Planning did not have programmatic or functional responsibilities to the states, so that its analysis of data and policy suggestions made it appear to be in an advisory position as well. Duplication was also seen in the mission statements of the units which declared that both would provide advice on planning and policy. For example, one of the missions of the Occupational Planning Office was to develop comprehensive plans for the administration of federal legislation. At the same time, it was the responsibility of the Planning Office to prepare long-range plans and organize and conduct strategic planning activities. In addition, the Occupational Planning Office's responsibility for developing federal educational policy duplicated the efforts of the Planning Office to analyze current statutes and develop recommendations for improving legislation related to Bureau programs, and to conduct short-term studies for use in policy development and analysis.

A temporal distinction between the two units was drawn by the Bureau. While the Planning Office was responsible for short-term planning from one-to-three years, Occupational Planning was concerned with long-term planning beyond three years. The distinction attempted to reconcile some of the existing duplication but differentiation on the basis of time cycles is not supported by any known management models.

The Bureau needed a planning unit that would provide forward thinking and strategic analysis. A properly-structured planning unit would be capable of analyzing data in order to propose programmatic policy and alternatives for implementing current and future legislation. In addition, the Bureau needed an administrative process to assist management in planning for organizational changes, budgeting, communicating, staffing, and evaluating activities and the achievement of goals.

There were other structural problems within the Bureau. There was no comprehensive information system within the Bureau's structure to document policies, goals, significant issues, and evaluations. Such information would provide the Bureau with a measure of performance of the technical process of sound management and the network and outreach processes of providing assistance to state and local agencies. Accountability data could be used effectively in the Commissioner's Annual Report to Congress (as mandated by P.L. 94-482, Sec. 112(c)) and in reports to the states on both the progress made and problems found in implementing legislation.

Due to considerations of time and cost, any plan to reorganize would require careful review. A study of the Bureau conducted in 1977, by its Ad Hoc Administrative Review Committee, recommended that future organizational patterns developed by the Associate Commissioner and Commissioner should have enough flexibility to adapt to Congressional changes in legislation. While the Committee did not address changes in programmatic areas, it did recommend the establishment of an associate commissioner for management, data, planning, and evaluation. This emphasis on management was consistent with the new Deputy's call for the improvement of planning, accountability, and data systems.

A new structure developed in order to implement the master plan would have to emphasize cooperative education and service to the disadvantaged, handicapped, displaced homemakers, and other adults. Approximately 34 percent of the federal vocational education funds were designated for the disadvantaged (20 percent set-aside, 14 percent from P.L. 94-482, Sec. 102(b)) and 10 percent for the handicapped. Leadership at the Bureau level in these functional areas was provided by only one specialist for the disadvantaged (half of whose workday was devoted to services, half to union activities) and by another part-time specialist for the handicapped.

In past reorganizations of the Office of Education's vocational education unit beginning 15 years earlier, no internal evaluations were conducted to measure the effects of structural changes. The Office of Education had not established objectives which could document the results of the reorganizations. Documentation would

be possible through the establishment of a master plan and an evaluation process that described the contribution of units and staff in achieving goals.

Vocational education is a national concern linked closely to the social and economic well-being of all people. In view of the expansive role of vocational education, strong national leadership is needed. Since it appears that many states organize themselves in a way similar to the Bureau, any well-reviewed reorganization based on a master plan would influence the states. Changes in its national administration and operation would reverberate throughout the system and facilitate a widespread improvement and expansion of vocational education.

Staffing. Most of the problems identified in the Council's Interim Report and in subsequent studies were aggravated by the inadequacy of the Bureau's staffing. The absence of a sufficient number of clerical employees and professionals was a serious problem throughout the Bureau. The need for additional staff was recognized by Congress in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-482, Sec. 160(b)(3)). These amendments mandated that the Commissioner of Education, in order to adequately administer the programs, increase the Bureau's staff by at least 50 percent of the 1976 staffing level by the end of fiscal year 1978. The 50 percent rise came to represent, through an internal agreement, 68 new positions and increased the Bureau's authorized ceiling for fiscal year 1978 to 242 people.

The Congressional mandate was not, however, fulfilled. Thirty-five positions were to be filled in 1978, the remaining 33 slots were scheduled for the 1979 appropriations. Of the 35 positions promised in fiscal year 1978, only 11 were filled as of the summer of 1978. A total of 57 positions that were intended to administer the legislation were left open.

The authorized ceiling for the Bureau for fiscal year 1978 was 242 people. By the end of the spring of 1978, however, only 148 full-time permanent staff members were employed. The Bureau was below the fiscal year 1978 ceiling level in five units, achieving only 60 percent of its personnel authorization.

The inadequate number of employees, though confined to five units, adversely affected the entire operation and administration of vocational education. For instance, the lack of an adequate staff affected services to the field. In surveys of the Bureau staff, the Division of Research and Demonstration was considered to be in need of experts with skills in research and writing and high-

grade professionals to work in bilingual, Indian, and minority education and as military liaisons. According to the Division itself, the quality of the preparation and selection of work statements for Requests for Proposals was in need of improvement. The review of some of the 1978 requests demonstrated the necessity of improving the quality of work statements. For example, one request was for the development of a model for Native American vocational training. While the work statement provided some resources that the proposal writer might consider, two documents that would have been helpful were not included, a study by the Bureau on the Impact of Vocational Education Programs on American Indians, Contract No. OEC-9-74-0007, and the Council's 1977 Report of Hearings held on Native American vocational education. With the proper number of employees, more comprehensive work statements could have been developed. Also, after awarding contracts, the monitoring and documenting of change and impact, and the provision of technical assistance could have been conducted on a more systematic basis.

Programmatic services to the states were also affected by the limitation on the number of staff. Another survey was conducted of personnel from 30 states about the quantity and quality of Bureau services. State personnel generally responded that although the quality of the services offered was high, there were not enough available to make an impact. There were eight professionals in the State Program and Services Branch of the Division of Vocational-Technical Education who provided programmatic services to the states for the eight vocational disciplines of Agriculture, Business and Office, Distributive Education, Health, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Trade and Industrial Education, and Technical Education. The disciplines were important because they instructed students in vocational skills and placed them in occupations. The disciplines were evaluated by law (P.L. 94-482, Sec. 112(b)(1)) and furnished the data required for state accountability reports. Thus, leadership for these disciplines at the national level was vital to the successful delivery of vocational education.

These eight professionals alone (six of whom had other major assignments) could not provide the needed services to the field. The eight were linchpins in the establishment and maintenance of a viable federal-state-local relationship, but without a proper communications system and adequate technical assistance, they could not provide the necessary services. An internal analysis of professional needs estimated that 23 professionals were required to assist the states in the administration of the vocational disciplines and student organizations.

While professional service was critical, an adequate, qualified

clerical staff was equally important. An inadequate number of support staff meant that some professionals had to assume additional responsibilities for clerical work. The situation caused many services to be limited, especially in the Division of Vocational-Technical Education. Because of a high clerical turnover rate, the Bureau needed to make comparisons between staff availability and work requirements in order to maintain them at a proper level.

The Office of Education tried in September, 1978, to reconcile the inadequate number of staff available by assigning 38 GS-5 level employees to the Bureau with a verbal agreement to increase the authorized ceiling from 242 to 280. However, the 38 people assigned as program specialists had no expertise or experience in vocational education. In addition, the fiscal year 1979 authorized ceiling level was set at only 250. This level was redefined as an employment ceiling and further reduced to 209 by a federal employment freeze begun on October 25, 1978. In conjunction with the freeze, the 38 positions were incorporated into the new employment level of 209, so that, in effect the Bureau lost the 33 positions that were scheduled to be filled in the 1979 appropriations. The authorized ceiling for fiscal year 1980 was placed at 205 but the employment level was not set. This meant that the Bureau's ceiling for employing staff had decreased by at least 45 positions, 250 in fiscal year 1979 to 205 in fiscal year 1980. These manipulations nullified the legislative mandate to increase the staff by at least 50 percent of the 1976 level. The provision of an adequate number of staff in 1978 to administer the vocational program was, therefore, not accomplished.

The Bureau units were also given authorized employment levels. For example, the Divisions of Vocational-Technical Education (DVTE) and Research and Demonstration (DRD) had the largest ceiling authorizations in the Bureau. As DVTE's authorization increased from 38 in fiscal year 1977 and 55 in 1978 to 63 in 1979, DRD's authorization also increased from 30 in fiscal year 1977 and 46 in 1978 to 53 in 1979. However, actual staff employed decreased as ceiling levels increased. At the end of fiscal year 1978, DVTE was 19 and DRD 11 people below authorized levels.

A factor influencing the size of the staff was the work measurement system. The system was regarded as an inadequate measure of staff needs and dollar requirements. The Division of Research and Demonstration considered the work measurement system to be a poor indicator of the number of personnel required to achieve specific goals. In addition, there were no records kept of the amount of overtime, making the average time assigned to particular tasks incorrect. A General Accounting Office's study confirmed that the

system advocated by the Office of Management and Budget was in need of revision. In a report entitled, OMB Needs to Intensify Its Work Measurement Effort (FPCD 78-63), the General Accounting Office found that the broad budget directives of Management and Budget contained language supporting work measurement but that it did not take an active role in developing the system. Management and Budget needed to provide agencies with more specific guidance in order to increase the use of work measurement systems for supporting staff requirements.

The absence of both adequate clerical help and qualified professionals for programmatic and service areas and the recruitment of inexperienced candidates, both noted initially in the Council's Interim Report, prevented the Bureau from properly implementing its mandated assignments. It is necessary for the Bureau to resolve the problem of inadequate staffing by working to fill its proper ceiling authorization with personnel well-qualified by experience and/or education in the field of vocational education.

Operational Planning System. The Operational Planning System, initiated through an annual Bureau-wide meeting held in the spring of the year, established the priorities of the Bureau as a whole and the objectives for each of nine divisions and operating units. After the objectives developed by each division or unit head were discussed in an open session and agreement on them reached, the staff prepared milestones which provided the details for achieving the identified tasks.

The actual purpose of the Operational Planning System was ambiguous. While most staff members regarded the System as a planning mechanism, some managers used it as a tool for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of projects and services. Through management's control of the type, number, and scheduled delivery of projects, an evaluation of individual performance was made. A positive evaluation was given when a project was completed in the designated amount of time and accepted by a manager. Since no standards were specified, the acceptability of a project was subjectively determined. The staff noted that there were often unexpected changes, add-ons, and other variables that interfered with the System's operation, making it, at most, only an aid to the evaluation of unit performance.

Although the System was used to monitor individual performance, most staff members perceived it as a managerial planning instrument. They saw in it a method to indicate the priorities, goals, and objectives of the coming year, to outline the work plan, and to provide a unified sense of direction to the staff. The staff regarded

the use of a planning mechanism to evaluate individual performance as inappropriate. As solely a control device incorporating quantitative evaluation, it could not, without revision, properly and equitably measure the quality of individual performance.

When used as a managerial planning tool, the System did not fully describe changes in unit plans. The effectiveness of planning and follow-through was inconsistent and varied with each unit. The Bureau's plans often had little relationship to the actual work being done and were not flexible enough to allow for change and reallocation of resources. When changes were made in a plan, there was no coordinated follow-through by management. The System did not present a complete picture of established plans because the resources allocated to individual projects were not identified. Some staff members linked the System's ineffectiveness to an absence of strong managerial leadership within the Bureau. They found a direct relationship between the overall effectiveness and appropriate use of the System's plans and the quality of managerial leadership. Thus, although some units used the System effectively as both a monitoring and a planning mechanism, it was generally regarded in each case as inadequate.

The System's inability to evaluate the quality of work left the Bureau without a definitive measure of staff performance. Reports, memoranda, and letters successfully attested to staff input at meetings and conferences, and a comprehensive list of activities available to state personnel described the delivery of services to states. However, there was little evidence of the real impact of the Bureau's assistance to the states in implementing the provisions of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and its amendments because procedures within the Bureau were not designed to demonstrate the effects of the staff's technical assistance. To describe the impact of technical assistance, an evaluative mechanism was needed.

An evaluative system for demonstrating impact should be flexible enough to accommodate intervening variables beyond the control of the affected unit. For example, the Division of Research and Demonstration described three problems which inhibited the promotion of innovation and the demonstration of impact in its unit. One problem was caused by an insufficient number of staff. Without an adequate staff, the Division was unable to properly evaluate completed projects and follow-up activities and thereby bring about product utilization. A second problem centered around the three-year funding period which proved to be too limiting. A third problem arose from the absence of adequate field-testing, without which the Office of Education's Joint Dissemination Panel would not approve distribution of information regarding projects. These issues were problems of process and did not negate the Division's

responsibility for evaluating the impact of its services. Product evaluation is a critical component of effective management that can occur at various stages of the developmental process.

The Bureau needed to design a planning system that would establish priorities and properly allocate resources. A revised planning system could then be effectively related to a master plan and an improved work measurement system. The revised system could further ensure the implementation of inter-and intra-agency agreements. In addition, procedures could be established through the planning system to incorporate, implement, evaluate, and distribute recommendations (including follow-up) received from external sources. For example, the Bureau funded a study conducted by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the American Vocational Association on cooperation in vocational education. Among their conclusions, published in July, 1978, was a recommendation to the Bureau to "develop a data bank of competencies needed by individuals to enter or qualify for work in a broad range of occupations." An effective planning system would be flexible enough to incorporate such a recommendation. Furthermore, the managerial planning mechanism should be able to originate new projects. Public Law 95-561 called upon the Secretary of Defense to provide programs to meet the needs of individuals with an interest in vocational education. The same law mandated the Commissioner of Education to study and develop practices to ensure that evaluations are based on uniform methods, and that appropriate follow-up on the evaluations is conducted. The Bureau must also work creatively to further develop its internal system for controlling and evaluating activities that would enable management to correctly assess the degree and quality of projects and services.

Even though problems existed in the Operational Planning System, the Bureau must be commended for using a system for monitoring and planning. In order to manage more effectively, however, attempts should be made to clarify and improve this system. While recognizing that each is a component of the other, the Bureau should establish a system that separately provides for managerial planning and the evaluation of that planning and an evaluation of the effectiveness of staff services to the states in bringing about an improvement in the delivery of vocational education. Evaluation of staff services should include not only a control mechanism for the delivery of projects but also an assessment of the quality of staff activities through performance standards.

Internal and External Communications and Cooperation. A well-defined managerial planning system would facilitate the development of a satisfactory communications system. The inadequacy of the Bureau's

internal and external communication network inhibited cooperation with other agencies, with state personnel, and with vocational educators in the field.

Information within the Bureau was not widely distributed. Policy positions were rarely explained or discussed among staff. The results of projects and studies were neither widely disseminated nor made part of a resource bank. For example, little evidence existed of a formal procedure to inform the staff and other groups such as the State Advisory Councils of the results of quality reviews of the State Plan, the Annual Report and the Accountability Report. Federal legislation concerned with the handicapped and an inter-agency agreement between the Bureau and the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped should have ensured a more extensive dissemination of materials such as the Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality reviews to the State Directors of Special Education and the State Advisory Panels on Special Education.

Also, communication about mutual responsibilities among units within the Bureau was minimal. For instance, there was no coordinated promotion of exemplary vocational programs for adults. Just as the Division of Adult Education had serviced disadvantaged adults, the Bureau had provided opportunities to graduates of adult education programs so that they could continue a planned program of occupational development. However, there were few specific joint activities affecting the target population. A document prepared by the Division's staff clearly showed the points of common interest between adult education and the legislated requirements of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976. In a 1976 working paper prepared by the Division, the need was again recognized for further inter-agency cooperation. The paper called for the formal assignment of the Division's staff to work with other units and agencies. However, when cooperative efforts were attempted, there was little or no official follow-through on the resulting suggestions. An official commitment was necessary in order to make such efforts productive.

The fourteen existing inter- and intra-agency agreements, and the others to be developed, needed to be legitimized by including them in the Bureau's management document. Without specification in the Mission Statement, the agreements were unable to develop cooperation within and among the agencies. Furthermore, the existence of the agreements and the kinds of assistance that could result from them were not communicated to the vocational education field.

In fact, the responsibilities of the Bureau and the programs and assistance available from it were irregularly and haphazardly distributed to the field. Analyses of important pending legislation

were not prepared and disseminated to the field. Information to the vocational education community on full employment and welfare, for example, might have resulted in changes in the Administration's policy regarding the contribution of vocational education to these national concerns.

Changes that had occurred over the years in the structure and personnel of the Bureau were also not communicated to the field. As such, it was difficult for vocational educators who looked to the Bureau for leadership to keep up with the changes. In addition, the field was not consistently informed about the goals, priorities, and direction of the Bureau. For example, the new Deputy's priority issues should have been widely distributed to the field in order to provide a basis for dialogue and cooperation. The distribution of such information could be accomplished through the use of various media such as notices, newsletters, and position papers.

The area of research was also limited by poor communication. Research on priorities was conducted by the Division of Research and Demonstration, which gathered information from both the field and from other governmental agencies. However, the Division did not systematically obtain input on problems or research priorities from the vocational education community. The only formal input from the field occurred through a request announced in the Federal Register. Information about priorities from other governmental agencies was also not consistently obtained. For example, the relevant information from the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 was not made available to the Bureau staff by the Planning Office. Other studies had also been conducted which could have provided information on research and programmatic priorities. Longitudinal studies initiated by the Department of Labor, entitled Career Thresholds and Years of Decision, dealt with the educational and labor-market experiences of young men and women. An agreement with the Labor Department could have been reached to collect data on priorities. The Division of Research and Demonstration suggested that problems of poor communication in the research area could be resolved by increasing the input from the field in the establishment of national priorities and selection of proposals related to the priorities.

There were other areas where the absence of communications created a void in the federal-state-local relationship. For example, there was no evidence that the Bureau provided support materials to help agencies like the State Postsecondary Education 1202 Commissions work more effectively with postsecondary and area vocational schools.

In order to reconcile the other problems arising from the absence of internal and external communication and cooperation, it is necessary for the Bureau to establish a formal communications network. The development and maintenance of an internal and external communications system would provide timely and continuous information to the Bureau staff and to state and local vocational educators and would encourage feedback from the field.

Technical Assistance and Leadership. State personnel were interviewed in order to explore the quantity and quality of technical assistance made available by the Bureau. Technical assistance involves program services, functional services, and specialized functional services. Program services concentrate on the administration and operation of specific vocational fields and programs within each vocational field (i.e., assistance to programs in the fields of agriculture, distribution, health, home economics, office occupations, technical, and trade and industrial). Functional services apply to the operation of each of the vocational program fields (i.e., assistance to such functions as bilingual training, manpower information, evaluation, curriculum development, cooperative education, and special needs). Specialized functional services related to the management of ancillary activities that support existing curricula and open new instructional options (i.e., CETA, work-study, adult vocational education, personnel development, guidance, research and demonstration, postsecondary, and occupational planning). The term service was used to denote a variety of technical assistance activities by which the Bureau staff helped state personnel implement the law.

State personnel maintained that there was little assistance provided by the Bureau for program or functional activities. They noted, specifically, that there were few activities (with the exception of agriculture) originating from the Bureau's Division of Vocational-Technical Education. While their quality was satisfactory, the services were not readily available.

Part of the problem was caused by a systematic reduction of the Division's staff ceilings (and funds and expenses) from 1971 to 1976. Each of the program disciplines (Agriculture, Distribution, Health, Home Economics, Office, Technical, and Trade and Industrial Education) had only one specialist whose workday was, in many instances, divided among other responsibilities. For example, the Health Occupations specialist was concurrently responsible for the two functional areas of handicapped and vocational guidance. The specialist for Trade and Industrial education was also partially responsible for Industrial and Apprenticeship Training.

Expense funds for such items as printing and travel were severely

restricted. For six years, lack of funds prevented some program specialists from having materials printed. Although for fiscal year 1978, each specialist in the Division received travel money of $1,000, administrative policy did not allow them to use the money to attend state or regional meetings.

There was no clear explanation for the reduction of program services. Congress had not legislated such a reduction, and, in fact, expected local systems to build a total vocational program which could accommodate the needs of target groups like the disadvantaged and the handicapped, linguistic minorities, unemployed youth, adults, women, and prison offenders. While the law had become more specific and demanding of Bureau services, the number of Division staff available to carry out the services was steadily decreased.

The states' needs for technical assistance were made explicit in a survey of Research Coordination Unit Directors. The Directors stated that the Division of Research and Demonstration must become more active in providing technical assistance to and between the Coordination Units. In particular, more assistance was needed in announcing fund availability and Request for Proposal deadlines, in monitoring, reviewing, and assessing activities, in integrating proven practices into regular programs, in disseminating results, and in developing studies to analyze impact.

The need for assistance was shown again in August, 1978, by the House Appropriations Committee's concern about reports that CETA prime sponsors were encouraging vocational education students to leave school to take CETA or Youth Jobs positions. Adequate technical assistance from the Bureau would have identified and helped to resolve such conflicts. Technical assistance activities could have provided the Bureau staff with a better understanding of the problems hindering state and local programs. The built-in feedback system could have further aided the Bureau in reexamining priorities.

The Bureau staff was aware of the need for technical assistance and confirmed the importance of the federal-state network. The staff suggested ways to strengthen the system. They recommended bringing vocational, adult, and community education closer together at the federal and state levels, increasing joint federal-state leadership and coordination, and strengthening and exerting leadership by the Office of Education through outreach and networking. National leadership could be infused throughout the system by coordinating the activities of state and local leaders.

The operational definition of technical assistance needed to be incorporated into the Bureau's mission statement. A General Accounting

Office study on technical assistance (July, 1978, GGD-78-5B) quoted an Office of Management and Budget Study Committee on Policy Management Assistance. Their definition of technical assistance was:

> A term used to refer to programs, activities, and services provided by the Federal Government, a Public Interest group, or another Third Party to strengthen the capacity of recipients to improve their performance with respect to an inherent or assigned function. The delivery of technical assistance requires serving one or more of three functions: 1) transferring information, 2) developing skills, and 3) developing and transferring products.

The General Accounting Office further explained that studies were conducted on the technical assistance needs of state and local governments. The studies focused on:

1) a single type of technical assistance,
2) technical assistance needs in regional sections of the United States, or
3) technical assistance needs for a specific grant program.

The studies concluded that "state and local governments need technical assistance."

National leadership makes educational change possible by providing state and local agencies with the wherewithal needed to implement policies that improve the quality of vocational education. The relationship between leadership and technical assistance is imperative for the Bureau. Technical assistance should be provided in a continuous and comprehensive manner through a plan that incorporates short and long range objectives. Furthermore, in order to help ensure the quality of vocational education programs, the impact of technical assistance needs to be evaluated and the results reported.

Personnel Development. As previously discussed, in September, 1978, the Bureau hired 38 GS-5 level program specialists who had no experience or expertise in vocational education. The employment of these specialists increased the need for a more extensive personnel development program.

There were members of the Bureau staff who believed that some

employees were incompetent. A study of the competencies of program specialists within the Office of Education as a whole showed that only 33 percent of them had participated in staff development programs. In personal evaluations, the specialists placed themselves in a below-average category in 121 or 80 percent of the competency items. The study determined that there was a core of competencies that all Office of Education program specialists were expected to have. It further found competency "gaps" at the mid-management, GS-11-12 level. The study, though not centered on the Bureau staff alone, confirmed the need in the Bureau for a comprehensive developmental program that would, for example, conduct seminars and workshops and grant administrative leave to those seeking more knowledge or improved skills.

There was also a need for developmental programs to improve the quality of supervision. It was found in the Report of the Personnel Task Force, completed in 1976, by the Office of Education, that:

> Many supervisors are ineffective. Some are not professionally and/or tempermentally qualified to function effectively as supervisors; some have not used the opportunity to participate in the established training programs. Soft Data indicated that many employee problems are attributed to ineffective supervision or the supervision which has had negative effects. Many supervisors fail to have an effective, open communication system, both written and oral. Due to the failure of some supervisors to disseminate information to their staff, some OE employees are not fully informed on issues, problems, and policies that are in effect in OE.

Another study was conducted in 1977 concerning the Office of Education's Executive and Management Development Program. It indicated that, in most cases, outside applicants were more competent in supervision and management than the Office of Education's career employees.

The Bureau staff made several observations in surveys which summarized the need for personnel development. For one, they believed that an intensified training program was needed to improve the competency of the staff and their attitudes about work. They also thought that upper-level administrators needed managerial training to correct some administrative practices which interfered with productivity. They needed to improve programming instead of trying to make favorable appearances through bureaucratic activities. The staff further believed that leadership was needed at every level to develop compre-

hensive plans and the strengths of the staff and to move forward with unity and direction.

Functional Activities. The use by the Bureau's staff of the terms "program" and "programmatic" was ambiguous. To avoid confusion and to differentiate between "programs" and "services," the Task Force substituted the term "functional" for the term "services." "Programs" or "programmatic services" were related to the curriculum objectives of the eight vocational education disciplines. "Functions" or "functional services" were related to those activities which sought to expand the services of the disciplines or help improve their operation. Thus, "programs" were identified with Home Economics or Technical Education, while "functions" were identified with such areas as evaluation, CETA coordination, and research.

Evaluation of state vocational education activities was conducted by the Bureau through quality review packages. These evaluations, prepared by the Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality, were designed only for analysis of the two state-level functional activities of planning and student follow-up. Other functional areas, evaluation and equal access were scheduled to be developed in fiscal year 1979. Although the Council supports the efforts, there was no commitment of resources to the preparation of reviews for such other significant areas as the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and information systems. While these quality reviews were regarded as permissive in that the states were under no obligation to make revisions, they provided baseline data of a state's operation.

In addition, little attention was given to the preparation of quality reviews for program disciplines. Criteria for the vocational disciplines of agriculture, business and office, distribution and marketing, health, home economics, industrial arts, technical, and trade and industrial education had not been made part of the quality reviews. The Bureau's agriculture staff committed resources to an exceptional project for the preparation of program and instructional standards. In Distributive Education, Industrial Arts, and Vocational Home Economics, similar projects were begun.

The CETA Unit's activities were inconsistent both with the law and with some of the Bureau's mission statements. Public Law 94-482 (Sec. 160) vested the Bureau with the responsibility for the functions of manpower training and development. Although the Unit was created in 1974, the Bureau did not clearly define the Unit's responsibilities and functions suggested by the March, 1978, Memorandum of Understanding between the Departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare, to implement the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project. Furthermore, the Bureau did not clarify the Unit's role in the advancement of those collaborative

mechanisms which included the provision of services to the field and the promotion of coordination. An operational definition for the Unit was not developed, it was explained, because the CETA legislation did not give the Office of Education or the Bureau specific responsibilities. Another factor was the establishment, in 1974, of an Office of Manpower at the departmental level which, until its demise in late 1977, maintained direct liaison for CETA activities with the Department of Labor.

In addition, although Public Law 94-482 (Sec. 105(d)(4)(A) and Sec. 106(a)(4)(C)) called for a coordinated approach between vocational education and CETA, the Unit was not made responsible for promoting national and state coordination. Technical assistance to ensure quality programs was noted in the unit's mission statement and the Operational Planning System, but the Bureau did not encourage that it be made available to the states.

Continuous, expansive technical assistance is an important element in the federal-state-local relationship and would help solve certain problems. For instance, the alleged encouragement by CETA prime sponsors given to vocational education students to leave school and accept CETA or Youth Jobs positions would not have occurred with adequate technical assistance. Comprehensive technical assistance facilitates the identification and resolution of problems.

Research was another functional area of the Bureau. State Directors of the Research Coordinating Units (RCU) reported that the Division of Research and Demonstration must become more aware of and involved with the RCU's and with state programs, problems, and new developments. It, therefore, must become more active and aggressive in its leadership role by providing effective usable information and technical assistance to and among the Research Coordinating Units. Particularly necessary were methods for the establishment of national priorities for research and for the announcement of fund availability and Request for Proposal deadlines. Also, the products of inter-agency cooperation could be distributed to the field to provide insight into and expectations for future developments.

Nearly all of the Research Coordinating Unit Directors agreed that more time was needed to prepare Requests for Proposals. In most cases, the minimum amount of time required was considered to be 60 to 90 days.

The Division needed to improve the packaging and dissemination of knowledge accumulated about effective programs, practices, and change processes related to demonstration, guidance, and curriculum and personnel development. The National Center for Research in

Vocational Education, under the guidance of the Division, was responsible for the dissemination of certain materials and information. Expanded efforts of the Division could improve the distribution of information to the field. Also, the Coordinating Committee on Research in Vocational Education had not fulfilled a legislative requirement to develop a plan to establish national priorities for the use of funds or a management research system.

There were problems outside the Division inhibiting its responsibilities. For example, the Division was responsible for monitoring the use of the one percent set-aside for vocational education for Indian tribes (P.L. 94-482, Sec. 103(a)(1)(B), i-iii). The Bureau of Indian Affairs was supposed to match the set-aside beginning in fiscal year 1979 (P.L. 95-40, (4)(A)). However, the Bureau of Indian Affairs received a waiver on the 1979 obligations and had not requested matching funds for fiscal year 1980. Furthermore, Public Law 95-40 stated that the Commissioners of Education and Indian Affairs should jointly prepare a plan for the use of funds and for the evaluation of programs so assisted. Although the plan was drafted and signed by the Commissioner of Education, there was no reciprocal action taken by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The research conducted by 13 federal agencies was also not properly distributed and evaluated. For example, the research-evaluation strategy of the Office of Education's Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation, as stated in its 1977 Annual Evaluation Report, was designed to determine, 1) "What effect . . . specific federal programs in education have upon their participants," and 2) "What improvements should be made in the management and administration of those programs."

The same report described the results of vocational education effectiveness studies:

> Studies of the effect of participation in vocational education programs have thus far presented inconsistent results. Some studies show increases in earnings and the ability to obtain a job, others do not; some show increased educational achievement while others show no difference . . .

Proposed fiscal year 1979 studies of the Bureau did not seem to be able to clarify such inconsistencies. The studies, an assessment of the provision of vocational education to Indians of tribes eligible to contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a reassessment of the adult population in terms of functional performance levels, were not as critical as studies of more

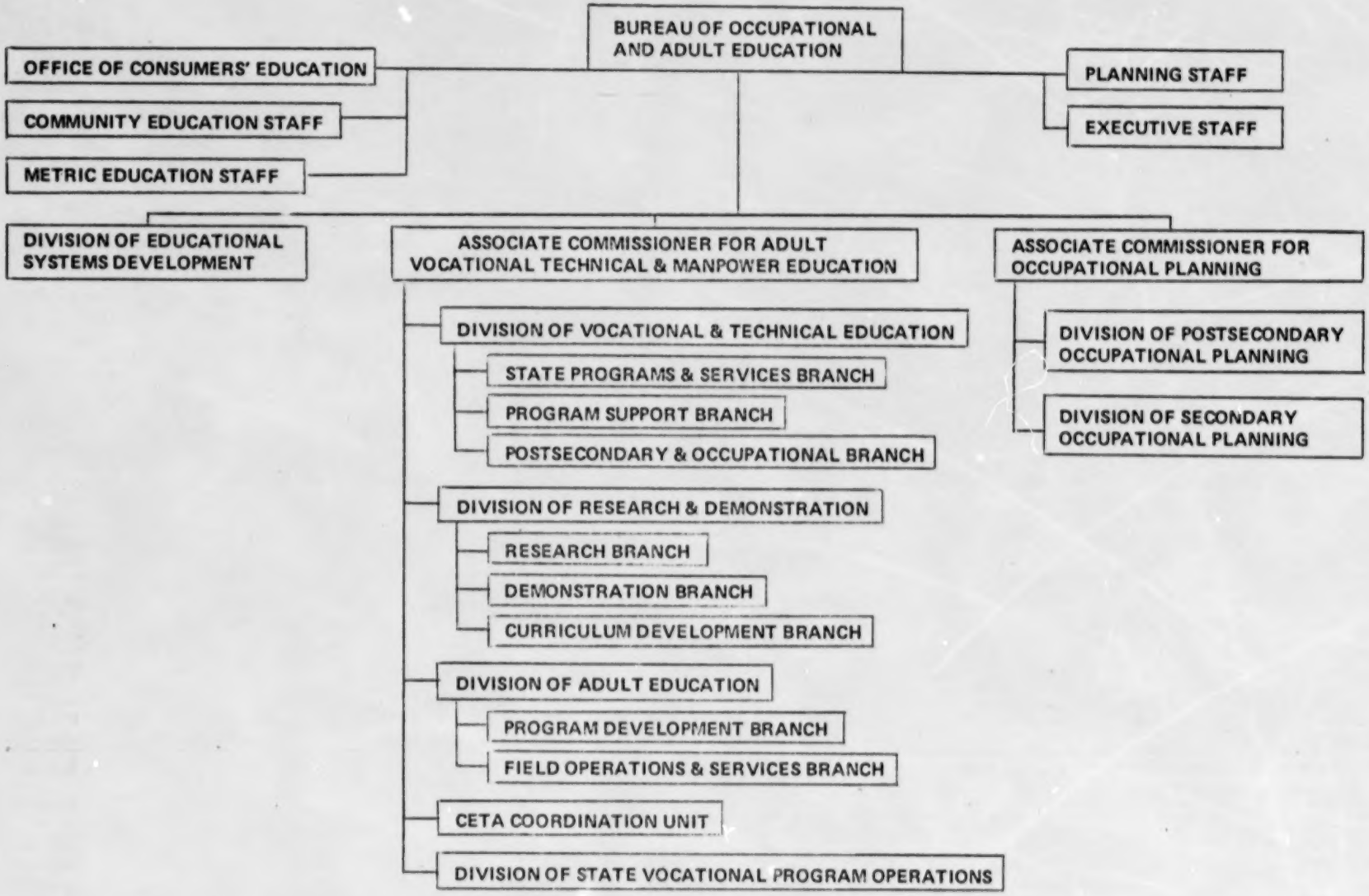
fundamental issues causing the inconsistencies. While the Planning Office requested suggestions for these fiscal year 1979 studies from the staff, there was no activity which could bring them together to discuss the direction or emphasis of evaluation studies. Similarly the staff apparently was not convened in any consistent or intensive manner to review findings of previous evaluations and relate them to present and future activities of the Bureau. Furthermore, there was no comprehensive, integrated analysis made of the studies for policy deliberations.

The research activities funded from discretionary money were being used in a purposeful manner to improve vocational education. Despite its efforts to ensure improvements, however, it is necessary for the Division of Research and Demonstration to perfect the planning and coordination of priorities and activities in order to enable the states to effectively influence the direction and intensity of priorities. Such an improvement would give state Research Coordinating Units the opportunity to tie their activities to national efforts.

Evaluation, CETA coordination, and research are critical to the continued improvement and expansion of vocational education. The enhancement of these operations in order to provide more effective services to the states can be achieved through national leadership.

The overriding conclusion drawn from these findings was that there was a great need for an accountability of administrative and operational activities within the Bureau. It was the responsibility of the Bureau to expand and improve the programs of vocational education by developing mechanisms to help states and local educational agencies implement these programs. In order to fulfill this responsibility, it is necessary for the Bureau to monitor the effects of its programmatic and functional services. Accountability at every level is a crucial factor in the success of a program. To bring about the expansion and improvement of vocational education, the Bureau must continually evaluate both the results of the program services provided and the processes that created them and demonstrate the effects of their assistance to the states.

ORGANIZATION DISPLAY


BUREAU OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION
OFFICE OF CONSUMERS' EDUCATION
COMMUNITY EDUCATION STAFF
METRIC EDUCATION STAFF
PLANNING STAFF
EXECUTIVE STAFF
DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR ADULT VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL & MANPOWER EDUCATION
ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR OCCUPATIONAL PLANNING
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL EDUCATION
STATE PROGRAMS & SERVICES BRANCH
PROGRAM SUPPORT BRANCH
POSTSECONDARY & OCCUPATIONAL BRANCH
DIVISION OF RESEARCH & DEMONSTRATION
RESEARCH BRANCH
DEMONSTRATION BRANCH
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH
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FIELD OPERATIONS & SERVICES BRANCH
CETA COORDINATION UNIT
DIVISION OF STATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAM OPERATIONS
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DIVISION OF SECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL PLANNING

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